



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk (860)441-6640
Town Manager
(860)441-6630

Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Heather Sherman Bond, Kathryn M. Brown-Tracy, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Rita M. Schmidt, Paulann H. Sheets, and James L. Streeter

Thursday, July 17, 2008

7:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 2

SPECIAL MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Bond, Councilor Brown-Tracy, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter

II. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

2008-0163 Proclamation for Relay for Life

The Proclamation was read by Councilor Kolnaski at the Relay for Life event.

III. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Christine Eckersley, Director of Precious Memories Preschool, 195 Sandy Hollow Road, Mystic, spoke about her and her partner's recent experience before the Zoning Commission. She recalled heckling from the audience and that the Commission seemed to be predisposed against the application. The experience left them confused and unsettled, and they recently withdrew the application for a third preschool. Their previous experiences before the Zoning Commission were professional, and they have always has good relationships with the department staff. They are concerned that this has become personal, and that the Commission is not implementing a fair process. An audiotape of the May 21st meeting is available.

IV. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

*Councilor Bond responded that the Council couldn't do anything to help them, that any decision must be based on the Zoning Regulations.
Mayor Watson outlined the procedure that could be followed, and encouraged them to come again for Citizen Petitions.
Councilor O'Beirne requested that OPDS staff prepare a report of the meeting, and include the audiotape. The Town Manager agreed.*

V. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2008-0176 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of July 1, 2008 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items

2008-0173 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts contributions to the Town as follows:
Various Donations - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Groton Utilities Matching Funds - April and May - \$626.78 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

Jeffrey Callahan - \$100.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous
Harold Waters - \$25.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous
Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce - \$500.00 - Tercentennial Miscellaneous
L. Ravsen - \$50.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous
Edwina Trentham and Gregory Coleman - \$50.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous
Sally McBee and Bruce Campbell - \$25.00 - Tercentennial Miscellaneous
L. Barrett - \$25.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous
Daniel and Jane Brannegan - \$250.00 plus additional \$250.00 from Pfizer matching - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous
Alice W. Houston - \$10 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous
Gray Jacobik and Bruce N. Gregory - \$50.00 - Arts Cafe Miscellaneous

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2008-0093 Council Goalsetting

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0177 Appointment of Joan Warren to Library Board

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0178 Appointment of James Loughlin Jr. to Cable TV Advisory Council

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0179 Appointment of Roger Roy to Cable TV Advisory Council

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

Passed The Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, to adopt the Consent Calendar, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Calendar.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 8 - Mayor Watson, Councilor Bond, Councilor Brown-Tracy, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Schmidt and Councilor Streeter
Abstain: 1 - Councilor Sheets

VI. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

a. Town Councilors

Mayor Watson expressed his frustration with the Board of Education concerning the search for a new Superintendent of Schools. He had spoken to Board Chair Beverly Washington about having a Councilor on the search committee. He provided copies of emails sent to and from Board Chair Washington. He is getting "mixed messages" regarding the wishes of the Board members, and notes that Chair Washington said that having a Councilor on the committee had to be a unanimous decision of the Board.

Councilor Kolnaski also noted that Board members had told her that they wanted a Councilor on the search committee.

Councilor O'Beirne, in his position as Chair of the Charter Revision Commission, reported on the recent Public Hearing held by the Commission. He noted that it was critical for the Council to set its own Public Hearing according to the schedule distributed previously. The Commission will formally present the Draft Report and Revised Charter at the Committee of the Whole meeting on July 22. He outlined the procedures that the Commission and Council must follow to put the Charter question on the November 2008 ballot.

Councilor Monteiro attended the Noank Zoning Commission Public Hearing on the Senior Center issue, and the reception held at the Bill Memorial Library.

Councilor Streeter attended the same meetings, and also the Thames Street Revitalization Committee meeting.

Councilor Brown-Tracy was present at the same meetings.

Councilor Schmidt also attended the same three meetings.

Councilor Sheets attended the Noank Zoning meeting, but missed the meetings on July 1 and July 8. She received calls concerned about the "Pequot Battlefield" and federal statutes, and possible land claims. She feels it would be useful to know more about the possibilities. She received a communication from Margaret Smith who is very much in favor of a budget referendum.

Councilor Bond attended the Noank Zoning Commission Public Hearing, and participated in the Fourth of July Parade.

Councilor Kolnaski participated in the Parade, and thanked the Mayor and Councilor Bond for decorating the Town vehicle. She attended the Noank Zoning hearing, and heard from people who did not want a budget referendum.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

The July meeting was cancelled.

c. Clerk of the Council

No communications.

d. Town Manager

Town Manager Oefinger reminded the Council of upcoming meetings, noting that at the next Committee of the Whole meeting it will be necessary to have an executive session concerning pending litigation.

He also noted that a property owner had contacted him concerning land acquisition near Flanders Road. This matter was referred to the Committee of the Whole and will also require an executive session.

e. Town Attorney

No report.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Brown-Tracy

No meeting, no report.

b. Economic Development - Chairman Bond

No meeting, no report.

c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Kolnaski

No meeting, no report.

d. Environment/Energy - Chairman Sheets

Report on file in the Town Clerk's Office.

e. Finance - Chairman Schmidt

No meeting, no report.

f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman O'Beirne

Report on file in the Town Clerk's Office.

g. Public Safety - Chairman Streeter

No meeting, no report.

h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Monteiro

No meeting, no report.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Watson**VIII. NEW BUSINESS****2008-0093 Council Goalsetting****RESOLUTION ADOPTING TWENTY-SIXTH GROTON TOWN COUNCIL GOALS**

WHEREAS, a statement of the vision and priorities of the Groton Town Council is beneficial as guidance for both the professional administrators and the citizens of the Town of Groton, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the 26th Groton Town Council adopts the following MISSION/ COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT:

- 1) The Town Council is committed to promoting the health, safety and general welfare of the community, fostering public awareness and active participation in safeguarding the community, and maintaining the confidence of the citizens.
- 2) The Town Council will plan for the community's future and represent Groton's citizens while maintaining the highest standard of ethical behavior.
- 3) The Town Council will foster positive communication with the Town's boards and commissions, political subdivisions, and state, regional, military and other federal agencies.
- 4) The Town Council will work to establish fairness and equity in taxation.
- 5) The Town Council will work to assure that Groton is a desirable place to live and work, by providing sufficient services, stimulating economic growth, protecting the environment, and preserving the community's historic character.
- 6) The Town Council will support Town staff and employees through improved communication and clear policy direction; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 26th Groton Town Council adopts the following GOALS:

Work to influence legislative policy at the regional, state and federal levels. Work to make state legislature more responsive to towns and be proactive in identifying legislative policy issues important to the Groton community. Support total tax restructuring at the state level.

Early in the budget cycle (prior to November 1st) work with the Town Manager and Board of Education with a goal to reduce spending.

Review, monitor, and implement as desired the recommendations in the Economic Development Strategic Plan and Plan of Conservation and Development.

Encourage land use agencies to address the issues of clean air, clean water, global warming, and residential sprawl, and consider adoption of alternative "smart growth" concepts.

Periodically meet with land use agencies (Planning, Zoning, and Inland Wetlands Agency) to receive updates on the revision of land use regulations.

Develop and implement a Town-wide property maintenance code.

Support and participate in the various state and local committees working to protect the future of the U. S. Submarine Base and improve communications between the Town of Groton and the Submarine Base so as to develop a far-reaching and stronger relationship between the Town of Groton and the Submarine Base.

Monitor the development of Phase II of the school improvement project.

Determine, evaluate, and approve the appropriate reuse of schools.

A motion was made by Mayor Watson, seconded by Councilor Bond, that this matter be Adopted as Amended.

Motion to Adopt was made by Mayor Watson, seconded by Councilor Bond.

Councilor Sheets is delighted with the goals, but regrets the deletion of the creation of a Reservoir and Watershed Protection Plan and Commission. She described the makeup of the proposed Commission and would like to see it retained.

Councilor O'Beirne expressed the opinion that this commission would be a "superagency".

Mayor Watson noted that the Committee of Chairpersons could discuss this issue at its next meeting in August.

The matter was referred to the Environment/Energy Committee.

Town Manager Oefinger remarked that the last goal concerning the recommendations of the school reuse committees should be made stronger than just to "consider."

Motion to Amend was made by Councilor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Bond, to change the wording to determine, evaluate, and approve appropriate uses of the schools.

Vote on the Motion to Amend was unanimously in favor.

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0186

Reservoir and Watershed Commission

RESERVOIR AND WATERSHED COMMISSION

Referred

The following three Resolutions were moved as one by Councilor O'Beirne, seconded by Councilor Monteiro.

2008-0177

Appointment of Joan Warren to Library Board

RESOLUTION APPOINTING JOAN WARREN TO THE LIBRARY BOARD

RESOLVED, that Joan Warren, 234 Elm Street, is appointed to the Library Board for a term ending 12/31/09.

A motion was made by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., seconded by Councilor Monteiro, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0178

Appointment of James Loughlin Jr. to Cable TV Advisory Council

RESOLUTION APPOINTING JAMES J. LOUGHLIN, JR. TO THE CABLE TV ADVISORY COUNCIL

RESOLVED, that James J. Loughlin, Jr., 35 West Mystic Avenue, Mystic, is appointed to the Cable TV Advisory Council for a term ending 7/1/09.

Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0179

Appointment of Roger Roy to Cable TV Advisory Council

RESOLUTION APPOINTING ROGER ROY TO THE CABLE TV ADVISORY COUNCIL

RESOLVED, that Roger A. Roy 300 Brandegee Avenue, #200, is appointed to the Cable TV Advisory Council for a term ending 7/1/09.

A motion was made by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., seconded by Councilor Monteiro, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn was made by Councilor Bond, was seconded, and taken at 7:45pm.

Attest:

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*